




## STARTING UNIVERSITY (I): RENTING A FLAT



### USEFUL PHRASES

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>AT THE ACCOMODATION AGENCY</b></p> <p>I'm looking for a 2-bedroom flat.</p> <p>I'm calling for the apartment for rent on Main Street.</p> <p>Is it still available?</p> <p>The flat is fully furnished.</p> <p>Are mattresses included?</p> <p>How much is the rent?</p> <p>Are bills included?</p> <p>Is the kitchen fitted with ...?</p> <p>Is there a bulletin where I can see rental announcements?</p> <p>Does the landlord/landlady accept cheques?</p> <p>This room is very dark and small.</p> <p>Is this street very busy in the rush hour?</p> <p>Is there a bus stop nearby?</p> <p>I'd like to negociate the rent</p> <p>The appliances are old and the kitchen looks dirty.</p> <p>I'm afraid the water heater is not working. Can you fix it please?</p> <p>You have to leave a one-month's deposit, plus a fee for the agency.</p> | <p><b>DOMESTIC CHORES</b></p> <p><i>Every flatmate must help with the different domestic duties:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• do the washing-up,</li> <li>• do the cooking,</li> <li>• do the dishes,</li> <li>• do the cleaning,</li> <li>• clean the toilets</li> <li>• vacuum the carpets (BrE Hoover the carpets), line the clothes,</li> <li>• take out the bin/garbage,</li> <li>• make the beds</li> <li>• take phone calls for other flatmates.</li> </ul> <p><i>Frequency:</i></p> <p>Every day</p> <p>Every other Tuesday (the bin)</p> <p>Once a month...</p>  |
| <p><b>THE IDEAL FLATMATE</b></p> <p>responsible, single, young, over 25, mature, animal-lover, non-smoker, hard-working, team-work skilled, party-goer, early-riser, night-bird, flexible, open-minded, talkative, serious...</p>   | <p><b>HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES</b></p> <p>central heating, gas cooker, oven, microwave, fridge, washing-machine, TV, DVD player, central heating, electric heater, Internet access.</p>  |

### EXERCISES

**1 WRITING A SHORT AD FOR A NEW FLATMATE.** You've got an empty room in your flat. Write a short ad for your university notice board. Don't forget to include: location, description of the room, main appliances, your ideal flatmate, and contact details.

#### FLATMATE WANTED

.....

## 2 MATCH THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WITH THE ANSWERS

Answers: 1 ... , 2 ... , 3 ... , 4 ... , 5 ... , 6 ... , 7 ... , 8 ... , 9 ... , 10 ... , 11 ... , 12 ... , 13 ...

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Are pets allowed?  | A) Water bills are included in the rent, but you will have to pay for the rest.  |
| 2. Is smoking allowed?  | B) I'm working at a clothes shop.  |
| 3. Are bills included? Gas, electricity, heating...                 | C) I go to discos at the weekends, but I'm responsible and sensible. I'm not noisy.  |
| 4. What do you do for a living?                                     | D) You can receive guests, but they cannot stay overnight.   |
| 5. Are you a student?   | E) We take turns to clean the bathroom, toilet and kitchen. Everyone must do their own room and their own cooking. Oh! You should also take care of the garbage once a week. |
| 6. Do you like partying or clubbing?                                | F) We've got a microwave, a big fridge, a TV and a DVD player, satellite TV and a dishwasher. We don't have a washing-machine. (There's a launderette round the corner)      |
| 7. Are parties allowed at the flat?                                 | G) The rent is £330 for the room. There's a deposit of a month's rent.   |
| 8. Can I receive visits?  | H) No, I'm sorry, animals are not welcome here.  |
| 9. How is the housework divided?                                    | I) You can have parties, but make sure to tell your flatmates in advance, and respect the neighbourhood.   |
| 10. What electric appliances are there in the flat?                 | J) The rent should be paid no later than the 5 <sup>th</sup> of each month.  |
| 11. How much is the rent?   | K) You must pay cash. The landlord will come round when it is due.   |
| 12. On which day is the rent due?                                   | L) Yes, I am. I'm taking a degree in journalism.   |
| 13. How should I pay the rent: cash, bank transfer or direct debit? | M) This is a non-smoking flat.   |

## 3 FILL IN THE GAPS AND COMPLETE THE CONVERSATION

1) ..... 2) ..... 3) ..... 4) ..... 5) .....  
 6) ..... 7) ..... 8) ..... 9) ..... 10) .....

|  |
|--|
| housemates   manage   come in   bills   washing-machine   toilet   nearby   overnight   contact   kingsize |
|--|

A\_ Hi, I'm Alicia, I'm interested in the room you have to let.

Nice to meet you Alicia, I'm Trisha. Would you like to 1.....and have a look?

A\_ Yes, I think so.

Please follow me upstairs. I'll show you your room first

So this is your room. It is very big, it has a 2.....bed, and the window looks onto the back garden.

A\_ I see, it's very calm. Perfect. The wardrobe is big! Can I use these blankets?

Yes, they come with the room. And look, the room also has its own bathroom, here. Everything is new.

A\_ No 3 ..... though.

No, we will have to share the toilet.

A\_ How many 4..... are there?

We are four, including you if you stay with us. 3 girls and John, the only boy.

A\_Are you party-lovers?

Mmmm, we sometimes have a party at home, but we ask the host to tell the rest the housemates at least one week in advance, and never during the examination period.

A\_It looks fine. One more question: my boyfriend will come to see me every now and then. Can he stay 5.....?

No problem with that.

Now, please follow me: this is John's room, this door opens onto my room, and this is Jane's room. The toilet is at the end of the corridor.

(they climb down the stairs)

Now, downstairs there is the front room, oh! This is Jane. We've got satellite TV and a DVD player. You can use my films if you like.

A\_Do you have dinner here or at the kitchen?

Oh, the kitchen is very small, you'll see. So we all have dinner here, but don't worry, we have different schedules.

OK, let's see the kitchen now: here it is. As you can see, there's full of light in the house. Now: the kitchen is very simple: there is a gas cooker, a gas oven, a 6 ....., and a fridge.

A\_Oh, the fridge looks very small! Can I open the freezer?

Go ahead.

A\_How do you 7 ..... to place your food here?

Every housemate's got a shelf: I'm afraid you'll have to buy less food and do the shopping more often.

A\_I see... And there isn't a dishwasher, is there?

Nope: no dishwasher either...

A\_Where are the plates and things?

Right: plates and mugs are here on the shelf, cutlery's here [opens a drawer] and pots and pans are down here.

A\_Very well. Is there a bus stop to town 8 .....?

Sure: it is opposite the postbox.

A\_And, the price is £250 for the room. Are 9 ..... included?

Everything is included: gas, electricity, water and heating, except the telephone and the TV. So, what do you think, do you like it?

A\_Well, I quite like the room, but I don't like doing the dishes, and the fridge is small... I'll have to think it over. When could I move in?

As soon as you think it over.

A\_One final question: are there any supermarkets near the house?

Sure there is the Tesco at the end of the street, and a Pakistani newsagent which is always open.

A\_Well, thanks a lot: I'll let you know as soon as possible, can I have a 10..... number please? ...

#### LISTENING ONE: ARRANGING A VISIT TO AN APARTMENT TO LET.



PLAY

Listen to the conversation and answer the questions.

1. Who answers the phone?
2. What's the purpose of the call?
3. What time are they meeting? Where are they meeting?
4. Should the tenant bring any document?

**Important words:**

- Tenant
  - Landlord/ landlady
- Accomodation Agency
  - Real Estate agent

**LISTENING TWO: ASKING FOR INFORMATION ON THE PHONE.**

Listen to the following conversation and tick the correct answer.

|   |  |                    |                         |                              |
|---|--|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | How far is the house from the centre of Cardiff? | 3 miles            | 5 miles                 | 6 miles                      |
| 2 | Are there any shops nearby?                      | Yes, on the corner | No, there are no shops. | Yes, at a 5-minute bus ride. |
| 3 | How many rooms are there downstairs?             | 3 rooms            | 4 rooms                 | 2 rooms                      |
| 4 | How many bedrooms are there in the house?        | 4 bedrooms         | 3 bedrooms              | 2 bedrooms                   |
| 5 | Is the kitchen furnished?                        | Yes, it is.        | No, it isn't            | --                           |
| 6 | Does the kitchen have a dishwasher?              | Yes, it does.      | No, it doesn't.         | --                           |
| 7 | How much is the rent?                            | £160               | £150                    | £170                         |
| 8 | When are they meeting?                           | Tomorrow at 5      | Today at 7              | Tomorrow at 7                |

**WATCH THE VIDEO: DOES YOUR NEW FLAT COME WITH A HIDDEN SURPRISE?**

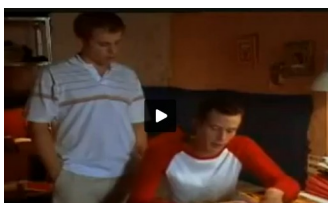
Sometimes the flat of your dreams turns out to be the flat from Hell. Watch the video and answer to the following questions:



1. Who should accompany you on your visit to the flat?
2. Why should you be observant to details in the flat's neighbourhood?
3. Why is the weekend the best moment to visit the flat?
4. What are the different safety devices that you can see in the video?
5. What should you do in order to check that water pressure is good?
6. How much is the average American rent for a flat?

### WATCH THE VIDEO: WATCH THE FOLLOWING SCENE EXCERPTED FROM “THE SPANISH APARTMENT”

*“The Spanish Apartment” is a 2002 French film directed and written by Cédric Klapisch. It is about Xavier (Romain Duris), an economics graduate student studying for a year in Barcelona, Spain as part of the Erasmus programme, where he meets and learns from a group of students who hail from all over Western Europe. This film is a cult movie for Erasmus students.*



Answer the following questions:

1. A flatmate enters the room of another flatmate who is doing something. What is he doing?
2. Who is the English guy looking for?
3. What nationality is the flatmate who is sitting in his room?
4. The English guy establishes a comparison between two countries. Explain the comparison.
5. Why is the room owner angry? Why does he want the English boy out of his room?
6. Do you think there is a relationship between the English boy and the girl? Explain your answer.

*WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE? CHECK THE OFFICIAL TRAILER AT:*

<http://movies.nytimes.com/movie/266229/L-Auberge-Espagnole/trailers>